(d) if so, what is the present status of the proposal and by when Government's approval is expected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It is felt that language has been one of the biggest constraints for increasing our IT exports to Japan and that dissemination of the knowledge of Japanese language could play an important role in development of Japan as a highly potential market for Indian IT exports.

(c) and (d) The Department of Commerce, Government of India through Electronics & Software Promotion Council (ESC) in collaboration with Japanese counterpart JETRO has launched a scheme under Language Related Market Access Facilitation Initiative (LRMAFI) to train Indian IT professionals in Japanese language. Under the scheme the financial assistance will be provided to any exporter or IT students to pursue the course in Japanese language. All expenses will be reimbursed by ESC up to a maximum of Rs.10,000/- per exporter. The Institutes extending the course in Japanese language are IITs, IIMs, RECs, IGNOU, BITs and deemed universities.

Interconnections on Cheaper Rates

†2990. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sent any proposal to VSNL to reduce its international rates and to provide interconnections at cheaper rates;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) VSNL's reaction thereon;

(d) whether Government-owned telecommunication companies are planning to go to other international call service providers who are providing cheaper service than that of VSNL;

(e) if so, by when a decision is likely to be taken in this regard; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

(d) to (f) It has been decided that Government owned telecom companies i.e. Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) will route their International Long Distance (ILD) calls through Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) for a period of two years after transfer of management control to the strategic partner as a most favoured customer which would be at market rates.

ISD/STD/PCOs IN A.P.

2991. SHRI DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications pending with his Ministry for allotment of ISD/STD/PCOs in Andhra Pradesh as on date and since when, district-wise;

(b) the details of the PCOs allotted in the State during the last three years, year-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to clear all the pending applications for PCOs in the State within a time-frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) The information is given in the statement (*See* below).

(b) The details of PCOs allotted in Andhra Pradesh during the last three years are as under:—

Year	STD/ISD PCOs	LOCAL PCOs
1999-2000	11863	5039
2000-2001	14218	10183
2001-2002	7155	13291